

PRESS RELEASE

Erik C. Peterson
United States Attorney
Western District of Wisconsin
(608) 264-5158
TTY (608) 264-5006
www.usdoj.gov/usao/wiw

For Immediate Release

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Contact Person

Laura A. Przybylinski Finn
Assistant U.S. Attorney

Madison, Wisconsin -- Erik C. Peterson, United States Attorney for the Western District of Wisconsin, announced that Ronald R. Shankey, 42, Hudson, Wisconsin, was sentenced today by U.S. District Judge John C. Shabaz to nine years in prison for possession of child pornography. Shankey pleaded guilty to this charge on February 28, 2007.

Evidence of Shankey's involvement in this offense was obtained following the execution of a search warrant at his residence in Hudson, Wisconsin, on September 7, 2006. Federal agents previously executed a search warrant at Shankey's residence in 2005. At that time, agents recovered evidence that Shankey accessed chat rooms involving the exploitation of children, but seized no evidence of possession or distribution of child pornography. As a result of the September 2006 search of Shankey's residence, agents discovered in excess of 1,000 images of child pornography, as well as evidence of e-mail distribution of child pornography.

Shankey's sentence was enhanced based on a number of aggravating factors, including distribution of images, possession of sadistic images, and images of children under 12, as well as the large number of images possessed. Judge Shabaz noted that

one of his biggest concerns was that Shankey's possession and viewing of child pornography created a continued demand and encouraged the continued victimization of more children. In addition to nine years in federal prison, Judge Shabaz sentenced Shankey to a lifetime of supervision following that prison term.

This case has been brought as part of Project Safe Childhood. In February 2006, Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales created Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative designed to protect children from online exploitation and abuse. Led by the U.S. Attorneys' Offices, Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state and local resources to better locate, apprehend, and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet, as well as identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.projectsafechildhood.gov.

The charges against Shankey were the result of an investigation conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Defense Criminal Investigative Service, and the St. Croix County Sheriff's Department. The prosecution of the case has been handled by Assistant U.S. Attorney Laura A. Przybylinski Finn.

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